

Saint Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church

Saint Sharbel, Pray for Us!

1804 SE 16th Ave., Portland, OR 97214 503.231.3853 <u>stsharbelpdx@gmail.com</u> <u>www.stsharbel.org</u>

December 26, 2021

Sunday After the Birth of Our Lord Praises to the Mother of God



Next Sunday

Finding in the Temple

Heb 7:11-19 (Melchizedek, a Type of Christ)

Lk 2:41-52 (The Boy Jesus in the Temple)

Your Gifts To God

Offering Report for December 12th - 18th

Online Collection Weekly Total	\$462.00
YTD Total	\$98,062.47
YTD Goal	\$94,146.00
YTD Difference	\$3,916.47

Liturgy Intentions

Sunday, December 26th, 11:00am

+Msgr William Bonczeski

Monday, December 27th

+Leila Khoury

Tuesday, December 28th

Available

Wednesday, December 29th

Available

Thursday, December 30th

Available

Friday, December 31st

Available

Saturday, January 1st

Available

Sunday, January 2nd

Available

Adoration/Exposition every Sunday at 10:00 am before the morning Liturgy.

Confession every Sunday 10:35-10:50am before the morning Liturgy.

Also join us to pray the Rosary on Sundays at 10:30 am before the Liturgy begins.

Altar Sponsorship

Sunday, December 26th

Available

Sunday, January 2nd

Available

Parish | Community Events

Parish Council

Bruce Ashford

Charlie Ashou

Gus Bekahi

Nick El Hajj

Agopos Ghossein

Adib Karam

+Claude Karam

Anne Marentette (Secretary)

+Doug Raab

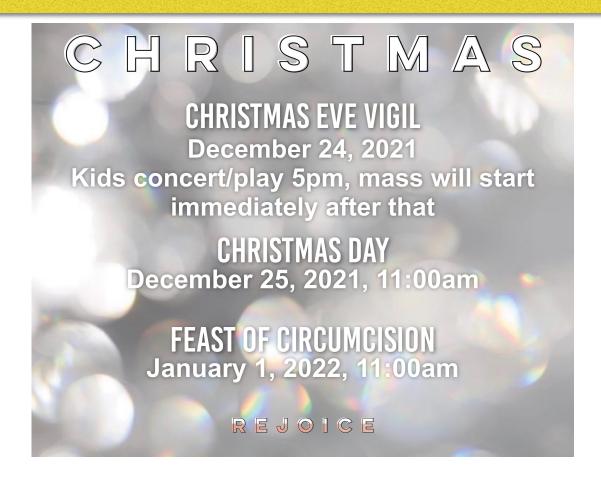
+Thaddeus Rask

Nadia Redmond

Mitch Siekmann

Ex Officio +Deacon Tony +Deacon Wadih

> +Finance Committee





St. Sharbel's Sunday School

Christmas Eve Pageant

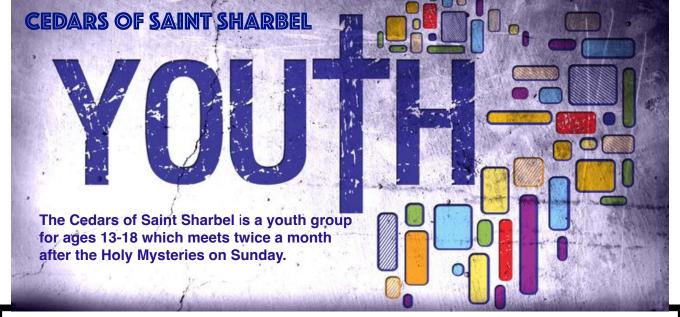
Christmas Pageant will begin at 5pm. Mass will start immediately following the pageant.

St. Sharbel Sunday School Program (Ages 6-12):

All meetings are held after the Divine Liturgy in the Parish Hall downstairs, unless otherwise noted. All participants will be required to wear a mask and practice physical distance. For more information contact Nadia Redmond at n.redmond@comcast.net.

UPCOMING CLASSES AND EVENTS:

December 24 - Children's Christmas Eve Pageant



We will be meeting in person, God willing. Meetings will immediately follow mass, in the downstairs basement. All participants will be required to mask and social distance.

2022 Meetings (Subject to Change)

January 9

January 23

February 6

February 20

Meeting dates are posted here and sent out in email. For more information, contact Gennifer Karam: jmjkaram3@gmail.com

With Gratitude to Almighty God and to our Blessed Mother, Mary,

The Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles announces and the Kaldawi family invites you to the

Ordination to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ of Deacon Wadih Z. Kaldawi

Through the invocation of the Holy Spirit and the Imposition of hands by His Excellency Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, D.D., M.L.M.

On Saturday, January 29, 2022 at eleven o'clock in the morning
At St. John Maron Maronite Catholic Church
300 Flower St. Orange, California
A lunch reception will immediately follow
in the Church banquet hall.

Father Wadih will celebrate his first Divine Liturgy at St. John Maron on Sunday January 30, 2022 at twelve fifteen o'clock in the afternoon. A lunch will be served after the Divine Liturgy in the church hall.

Please respond by January 10, 2022 to Mona Kaldawi (503) 313-6403 or email Monzak21@ Hotmail.com





The MYA is a group of men and women ages 18-40 (ish) which meets once a month for fellowship, prayer, and social activities. If interested, please contact Claude Karam at claude@trazzafoods.com

Next Meeting Date TBA

Reflection

Lk 1:46-55 (The Canticle of Mary)

Christmas seems to be the most joyous time of the year, and rightfully so as we celebrate the day our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world in His love to save us. It is interesting to ask, why, then, do we celebrate two dark events the week of Christmas – the martyrdom of St. Stephen, the first martyr (Dec. 27) and the Holy Innocents, slain by King Herod (Dec. 29)? Why would we celebrate two feasts about death during the same period we celebrate the birth of God as a man? The answer to the "why" can be found in looking exactly "what" both feasts are.

St. Stephen's feast comes two days after Christmas every year. He was one of the men appointed to be a deacon by the Apostles. In Acts 7, St. Stephen recounts how God has always guided His people, as Pope Benedict XVI says, to prove how Jesus Christ is the completion of God's plan of salvation for all He has done for us. The Jewish Sanhedrin, or council of leaders, was enraged by this, as well as the rest of his preaching of Christ, and they had him stoned to death. But, imitating Christ's own words on Good Friday during His crucifixion, St. Stephen prayed that God receive his spirit and forgive those who killed him. As such, St. Stephen is known as the first martyr (coming from the Greek word witness) to the faith of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Innocents, then, are considered in their own way to also be first martyrs. As Matthew writes in the second chapter of his record of the Gospel, Herod met the Magi before they made it to the Christ Child and so he heard the King of the Jews had been born. King Herod feared that such a king should be born in his jurisdiction and threaten his own rule, so he commanded that all boys in Bethlehem under the age of two be killed so as to kill Christ. Jesus, Mary and Joseph successfully fled to Egypt to avoid Herod's persecution, but unfortunately Herod slaughtered many children. The Maronite Office likens Herod to the Pharaoh in Exodus:

Two Kings traveled on two paths: they made war against infants. Pharaoh, the wicked king, and Herod, hater of truth. Pharaoh drowned infants to lessen the children of Israel and Herod killed youths for he willed to kill the Lord of All. Woe to both of them for they fought against truth. Behold, they [the children] were made heirs of the Garden of Eden, and torment is reserved for the kings.

Why, then, do we celebrate the death of saints so near to the birth of Christ? In both their own ways, St. Stephen and the Holy Innocents were martyred (that is, witnessed) for Christ, Who is the Truth – St. Stephen in his words, and the Holy Innocents in the purity of their being. Because of their witness, they are known as the first martyrs. But by witnessing to Christ, they did not die. They were killed in body, but as the prayer above says, "They were made heirs of the Garden of Eden" while those who persecuted them will receive torment. As we reflected last week, by Christ's birth He has united His divinity to our humanity. Those who witness to Him will receive life eternal in heaven, even if they should be killed – as Christ Himself says, "Whoever loses their life for me will find it" (Matt. 16:25). Christ was killed on Good Friday but He rose on Easter Sunday because He Himself is life – and He has united His life to those are Christian.

Each of us who call ourselves Christian must witness to Christ. Certainly only a few are called to physically die in profession of Christ, but persecution comes to all Christians, in one form or another. We are called to profess Christ in all we do for, as Christ has told us, "My Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day" (John 6:40). After the Birth of Our Lord in the flesh, we celebrate St. Stephen and the Holy Innocents' entrance into eternal life through the same Lord – may their prayers be a rampart to us.



Gibran N Zogbi Agent

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